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ABSTRACT

The reversal in migration patterns in the 1970's resulting in a net population flow from metropolitan (urban) to nonmetropolitan (rural) areas may have a variety of rural development consequences. Sizeable population increase in rural communities which traditionally have experienced net out-migration or very slow increases is evident in Maine where the data indicate this process is currently taking place. These data indicate that the majority of the in-migrants are characterized by: high levels of education; training and experience in professional and managerial occupations; small families; and migration from a more urban area to a rural or semi-rural area. The motivations of Maine migrants tend to center on quality of life considerations (reasons for preferring rural areas include: simple lifestyle-slow pace of life; peacefulness; serenity; friends; relatives in Maine; qualities of people; general environmental quality; lack of pollution; natural beauty; and the ocean coast). If Maine's in-migrants are at all indicative of a national norm for the urban to rural migrant, there are definite implications for rural development policy making decisions, because Maine in-migrants are both stimulating local economies and up-grading local services (they are demanding better and more varied education, better libraries, etc. and they are contributing to cultural activities, small businesses, the publishing fields, the development of local crafts, and the health services). (JC)

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THE REVERSAL IN MIGRATION PATTERNS -- SOME RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONSEQUENCES*

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Numerous papers and articles have been addressed to the recent shift in migration patterns in which there is now a net flow of migrants from metropolitan to nonmetropolitan areas. Among them are the papers of Beale (1975); Beale and Fuguitt (1975); DeJong and Humphrey (1976); and Fuguitt and Beale (1976); and Mitchell (1975). Perhaps Fuguitt and Beale, better than anyone else to date, have summarized the dynamics of the new migration movement as it effects rural areas. They state (Fuguitt and Beale, 1976:15) "The picture of population distribution in rural and small town America is anything but static." They could have well added that the population dynamics occurring in rural areas in the mid and late 1970's are likely to have significant and continuing rural development consequences.

Identifying what these consequences are and will be is, of course, a complex and monumental task. This assumption is in itself based on several sets of data, not all of which are self-corroborating. For example, it is common knowledge that, historically, economic motivation, particularly the obtaining of a job or securing the opportunity for self-employment has been a prime factor in migration (Greenwood, 1969; West, 1975). As we will explore below, however, job procurement or income enhancement is a far less significant motivation for migration than are quality-of-life factors for at least one of the new migratory streams. Others who have noticed this shift from traditional patterns are DeJong (1976), Graber (1974), and Knop (1973). A confounding aspect of this finding is that there continues to be a decentralizing of industry into rural areas which will no doubt continue to attract job hunters.

Another aspect of the new migration trends which complicates the task of defining their rural development consequences is the variation in their composition, direction, and magnitude. The point can be made, for example, by a brief analysis of differentials in the recent growth patterns of the northeastern states. In the 1970's in each of the states of this nine-state area, the nonmetropolitan counties have been gaining population at a more rapid rate than have the metropolitan counties. There is, however, great diversity in the patterns of population redistribution among the states.1/ It is likely, therefore, that the rural development consequences of the migration reversal no doubt vary from state to state, and probably, from region to region within the states as well. This

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1/For example, the three northern New England states are gaining population at a rate considerably higher than the national average. Each of them has relatively high rates of net in migration. Two of the three southern New England states are gaining population; all three experienced net out migration for the 1970-76 period. Two of the three mid-Atlantic states are experiencing population growth, but at a slow rate; all three had net migration losses for the 1970-76 period.

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assumption is based on the hypothesis that each socio-cultural area has characteristics which will serve as a selective attractive force to potential in-migrants. We will explore this conclusion in a forthcoming analysis of data from a Maine study.

The major thrust of this paper is that as rural sociologists we should concern ourselves with the possible rural development consequences, and the related policy significances, of the new urban to rural migration patterns. We should be concerned with not only the numeric aspects of the migration but also its composition. In the long run it is possible that the compositional changes attributal to the population inflow may be more important than the size of the migration stream.

To illustrate changes in rural population composition related to the ruralward migration flow data from a Maine study are cited.[2/] It is to be acknowledged that data from a specific state has, at best, limited generalizability for the entire United States. Other research, however, tends to substantiate the situation which exists for Maine (DeJong and Humphrey, 1976; Mitchell, 1975). Some of the socio-ecoromic characteristics of Maine in-migrants will be presented in narrative form. In a following section the implication of the data for rural development will be discussed.

In-migrant Characteristics[3/] -- Until the 1970's, Maine had a long history of net out migration. Little empirical data exists relative to the characteristics of the out-migrants. What sketchy information is available (informal audits of high school and college graduates; impressions of state and local officials) tends to indicate that the modal Maine out-migrant was, in recent years, a high school graduate in search of a job.

[2/] It is recognized that not all of the in-migrants to Maine come from urban areas although 92 percent of the in-migrant families in our sample did migrate from counties with 1973 populations of 50,000 or more. Similarly, it is recognized that Maine is not entirely rural. In 1970, 49 percent of the population resided in places of less than 2,500 persons. The physical distribution, the culture, the life style of Maine people is considerably more rural than the Bureau of the Census derived definitions would indicate. For a discussion of the problems of defining rural numerically see Copp (1970).

[3/] The cited data come from a study of household units in Maine in which, in 1975, at least one household member exchanged an out-of-state driver's license for a Maine license. An approximate one-sixth random sample, stratified by county, was chosen to be mailed questionnaires. Using a two-mailing methodology, the return rate was approximately 72 percent. Eliminating technical errors, deaths and other exigencies, 1,373 usable replies have been processed. From use of the driver's license data, Bureau of the Census estimates, and birth and death data, we estimate for both 1975 and 1976 that there was approximately 30,000 persons migrating from Maine and about a six percent change in population composition. The universe from which the sample was drawn was the nearly 13,000 new resident driver license applicants in 1975.

In contrast to the usual out-migrant, the new in-migrants are highly educated. As of 1970, eight percent of Maine adults 25 and older had completed four or more years of college. In sharp contrast, 44 percent of the in-migrant household heads had achieved this level of education. It is to be granted that years of educational attainment may not be, *per se*, the most important actuating element in the urban to rural migration movement. High educational attainment is, however, an extremely important concomitant of other social characteristics which are more usually associated with middle class urban than rural life. Among the close correlates implied in our statement is occupation.

The occupational distribution of the in-migrant heads of households differs greatly from the existing situation in Maine. In 1970, 10 percent of the males in the labor force were classified as professional, technical and kindred workers. An additional 11 percent were managers and administrators. In contrast, 38 percent of the male head of household in-migrants were included in the professional, technical and kindred category. Sixteen percent of the male household heads were included in the managerial category. Thus, the proportion of males in the labor force employed in the upper white collar occupations is about two and one-half times as great for the in-migrants than it is for the settled residents.

Despite the fact that Maine is a rural state and that agriculture has always been an important industry, only a small minority of the in-migrants are farmers. Less than one percent of the in-migrant household heads report their occupation as being a farmer, but 11 percent do report living on farms.

A situation which adds complexity to the rural development impact of the migrants is that in 22 percent of the in-migrant households there is no person working full time. In 57 percent of the households there was one full time worker; in 21 percent of the households there were two or more full time workers. In 28 percent of the households there was at least one person who was working part time.

Traditionally, migratory streams have attracted young adults. The current wave of in migration to Maine is no exception to the generalization. In 1976, 52 percent of the in-migrant household heads were under 35 years of age; 25 percent were ages 35 to 49; 23 percent were age 50 and older. Just seven percent were 65 years of age or older. Of the total sample of household heads (including the employed, incapacitated, students and homemakers) 16 percent were retired.

In keeping with modern trends the size of the family of the in-migrant households is relatively small. Perhaps more surprising is the lack of small children. In over three-quarters (78 percent) of the households there are no children under five years of age. In two-thirds of the households there are no children between the ages of five and seventeen, the normal age span for school children. Adults predominate in the in-migrant households. Classifying the households by whether or not they included persons ages 18-64, 25 percent had no more than one person, 74 percent had 2 to 5 persons and less than one percent had 6 or more persons.

Rural Development Implications -- That the demographic characteristics of the new wave of urban to rural migrants tend to differ from established rural norms is beginning to be well documented (DeJong and Humphrey, 1976; Campbell and Johnson, 1976; Mitchell, 1975). It would seem pertinent that rural sociological

researchers and social demographers would focus their attentions increasingly upon the rural development and policy implications of the migration flows. The Maine data indicate that for an essentially rural state, new in-migrant families tend to be young, small in size, well educated, and concentrated in the professional and managerial occupations. The long range design of our research includes a panel phase, with a control group, so that, over the years, we will accumulate data which will enable us to document the developmental effects of the migration. Presently, we do have evidence (a combination of empirical research data, systematic monitoring of communication media, and frequent contacts with state and local agency personnel) which has led us to formulate several hypothetical assumptions which will be tested in future research.

In regard to education there appears to be several trends taking place simultaneously (Cahill and Bouvier, 1974). The high educational attainment of the in-migrants leads them to support improvements in the educational systems of their chosen communities. It appears that one of the first public bodies to which the in-migrants are attracted and to which the community "permits" access is the local school board.[4/] In general, the in-migrant board members appear to support modern and progressive educational methods and practices. There have been several conflicts in Maine between, primarily, recent in-migrants and longer settled residents over educational policy. Two of the most frequent sources of conflict are the establishment of family life curricula and the required reading in literature courses. In general, the newcomers favor liberal policies and the longer settled residents take the conservative position.

Another education-related area that has caused strain between the settled residents and the more highly educated in-migrants has been the issue of alternative education. All of the alternative schools (with the exception of a few parochial [Protestant] schools) established in Maine rural areas in the 1960's and 1970's were founded largely through the efforts of in-migrants. In each case there has been at least minor friction between the supporters of the new school who are largely in-migrants, and the established community.

A source of irritation is to what degree, if any, the alternative schools should receive public support. The requests for support have ranged from school bus privileges to the operation, with full financial support, of the alternative unit within existing, functioning schools. Certainly the expansion of this kind of situation will call for policy determination at both local and state levels.

There are two situations which might make it possible for rural school boards to become more innovative. With the passage of the "baby boom" pupils through the schools, if there is not a marked increase in student population there will be an excess of school facilities, and at least temporarily, of school personnel. As indicated above, the in-migrant families, at least in Maine, tend to be small.

[4/] An unpublished study of the membership of local, publically elected or appointed boards, conducted in Maine in 1976 by Ethan A. Kelley and Louis A. Ploch indicates that in-migrants are likely to become public board members in the following order: school board, planning board, board of assessors, board of selectmen.

Thus, despite an increase in the number of families, school enrollment may not rise. Given the general level of affluence of the in-migrants, as indicated by their occupational backgrounds, the ability of the communities to raise money for the local support of education on a per pupil basis might actually increase. Given this situation educational innovations might be more readily accepted.

If the present migration trend continues and the level of adult educational attainment continues to rise, other aspects of rural living could be affected. Presumably there will be greater usage of whatever cultural facilities presently exist in the community. Increased strain could be put on such facilities as libraries (Jackson, 1974). Increased levels of usage may be accompanied by requests for library improvement and/or expansion. This situation has already occurred in several Maine towns. Some local libraries are being strengthened in rural areas through volunteer efforts largely stimulated by in-migrants. Books and subscriptions to periodicals are being donated. Labor is being volunteered for both library operation and maintenance functions.

Another type of cultural activity which has been stimulated by the increase in the number of in-migrants to rural and small town Maine has been the founding of theatre troupes and musical groups. Grange and other fraternal halls which were once the locales for drama and musical entertainment are once again serving this purpose. Groups, largely composed of young, recent in-migrants, are also reintroducing drama and music to rural schools in which they had long been absent.

A sizable increase in the proportions of persons in a rural community or area with experience in the professions and in the managerial occupations is likely to have profound developmental and policy consequences. Not only do the educational and cultural wants and desires of professional and managerial persons tend to vary from those of persons in other occupations, their demand for other services tend to vary as well. This fact may blunt the argument that the in-migrants will be in competition for jobs with long settled persons. The kinds of skilled craft, personal, and commodity services demanded by the newcomers are consistent with the abilities, experience and/or production of the natives and long settled residents.

The kinds of services which the professionally and managerially oriented in-migrants can provide are quite often in short supply in rural communities. In Maine, significant numbers of physicians and dentists are among the in-migrants. A number of rural Maine communities have for the first time in many years an adequate number of health practitioners.

One partial exception to the generalization that the in-migrants tend not to be occupationally competitive with settled persons, but one which does have positive rural development consequences, is the acquisition in rural areas of previously existing small businesses by the in-migrants. In Maine significant numbers of small businesses, particularly retail establishments and specifically general stores and hardware stores, have been bought by newcomers. In many cases the businesses were in poor condition and were owned by older persons facing retirement. Not only have the new owners revived the businesses, but generally they have restored to them much of their traditional rural image which had been lost over the years. Many of these enterprises and the communities in which they are located have become attractive to a variety of shoppers including tourists. Thus, a type of rural development has occurred.

Another type of retail business which the in-migrants have gone into is the craft shop, boutique, speciality category. In very few cases are they directly competitive with an established business. In many cases they cater to tourists and to other than local people. Thus, an additional income is generated at the local level.

Publishing is also a business area which has been stimulated by the in-migrants. A number of weekly newspapers have been bought and are being edited and/or published by the in-migrants. The prior newspaper experience of the new owners vary from that of the managing editor of a daily metropolitan paper of national prominence to reporters for small city papers. Most of the papers were, at best, marginally profitable at the time of their acquisition by their new owners. In each case for which we have information, after the local paper came under new ownership, both its quality and readership increased. And interestingly enough, one of the changes made in the format and style of the paper was a return to a more rural orientation replete with rural romanticism and nostalgia -- qualities which our data suggest serve as "pull" forces for some urban to rural migrants.

While some of the in-migrants acquired long established weeklies, others among them have started quite informal papers, usually in smaller communities of less than 1,000 population. Some of these papers are run more or less as community efforts; all of them have served as sources of community identity.

In Maine, in addition to the regular weekly newspapers, there has been a significant number of speciality newspapers and/or magazines established by relative newcomers. Among them are The Wooden Boat, Maine Commercial Fisheries, Maine Times, Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener, Maine, Farmstead, and Monday. The emphasis of the publications is evident in most of the titles. Monday is a financial publication. Most of the publications are edited in a manner which is attractive to people possessing the demographic characteristics shared by a majority of the in-migrant families. The circulation of the magazines, in general, have exceeded the initial projections of their publishers. All have made some sort of developmental impact, not the least of which has been the provision of new jobs.

As is the case with the new publications, many of the other business endeavors which the newcomers establish are not competitive with previously existing enterprises. Thus, many of the in-migrants have created new jobs and new sources of income. Included in the non-competitive category are the in-migrants with arts and craft skills. One Maine example is a small group of people, who have settled in a very rural area. Jay Davis (1976b) succinctly illustrates the economic value of the new group to the community:

> Local people working in such diverse fields as leather, wood, metal weaving, quilting, stained glass, china painting and pottery have combined annual sales of several hundred thousand dollars. A score or more local households are supported by the income; perhaps several hundred more receive welcome supplement from the sales.

Quality-of-Life Migration -- Earlier it was stated that the composition of the new rural migration stream may be as important if not more important than its magnitude. We have discussed some of these compositional importances. An aspect of the urban to rural migration flow which needs more explicit analysis is its quality-of-life orientation.[5/]

Approximately one-half of the in-migrant household heads included in the Maine study report that they are accepting less money income than before they migrated.[6/] An additional 30 percent of the household heads reported that their income was the same as it had been at the time of the move. What then were the motivations for the move? In standard sociological terminology, for the majority of the in-migrants, the moves were precipitated by a complex of push and pull forces which were quality-of-life related. The primary push factors were: crime, cost of living, "people" deficiencies, air and water pollution, and taxes. The primary pull factors were: simple lifestyle-slow pace of life, peacefulness-serenity, friends, relatives in Maine, qualities of the people, general environmental quality, lack of pollution, natural beauty, the ocean-coast.

The categories listed above were developed from open-end type responses. No more than 20 percent of the respondents volunteered a particular response. Thus, the specific reasons for the migration are varied, but the general thrust is for improvement in the quality of one's life.

What is the relevance of this data for rural development? Perhaps the greatest relevance implied in the term quality-of-life migration is the fact that for most of the in-migrant households the move was voluntary. They moved not because of economic necessity, but rather to enhance the quality of their lives. For the majority of them this meant leaving a relatively large urbanlike environment for a more rural setting.[7/] Nearly one-half (48 percent) of the in-migrant families moved from counties of 500,000 or more population. A total of two-thirds had resided in counties of 200,000 or more. At the time of the move, 1975 and

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[5/] By quality-of-life in this context we mean an attempt by the in-migrants to settle in areas where the environmental and people qualities meet their standards for a good, wholesome, unhurried life. Economic considerations tend to be secondary.

[6/] Apparently the majority of the Maine in-migrants, in deciding where to migrate adopt Cebula and Vedder's (1974:205) orientation that "... the individual chooses to migrate from one area to another if there are positive net benefits over time from such migration". In the case of the Maine in-migrants non-economic variables seem to be more important in making the decision than are economic forces. For a study which concludes that potential loss of income can be a constraining force on migration, see Carpenter (1976).

[7/] For a somewhat contrasting conclusion see Carpenter (1976:28), "The people that do move in the direction of large to small, however, will *not* (italics his) be selected disproportionately from any particular size area of origin". Our contention is that where the migration is primarily quality-of-life oriented and the target area(s) is rural there *will* be a disproportionate number of migrants from the larger to smaller areas. Generally these environmental-people qualities are perceived to be most lacking in the more urban areas and present in the more rural areas.

earlier, no Maine county had a population as great as 200,000. Of the two Maine metropolitan areas the largest central city (Portland) had a 1973 population of 65,000. The ruralness of the migration is emphasized by the fact that 40 percent of the in-migrant families settled in towns of less than 2,500 population. An additional 37 percent moved to towns of 2,500 to 9,999 population. With few exceptions even in the largest of these towns, most of the population lives in either the open country or in centers of less than 2,500 persons. Our study data, systematic observations, and the opinions of other trained observers lead us to the conclusion that the great majority of the in-migrants are highly rurally oriented. They are going to do their best to maintain the rural atmosphere and the natural beauty of the environment which attracted them to Maine.[8/] They are much more likely to be concerned with the preservation of environmental integrity and the slow pace of rural life than they are with economic/industrial expansion. They will resist acts and policies which countervene their value positions.

If these assumptions are correct, these types of attitudes could lead the in-migrants and settled persons with similar orientations into conflict with those holding expansionist, modernizing points of view. There is some limited evidence that such frictions are occurring in localized areas of Maine (Davis, 1976a).

Summary -- The reversal in the 1970's of migration patterns resulting in a surplus of urban to rural migrants is likely to have many rural development consequences. While it is recognized that the migration flows into Maine are not necessarily illustrative of what is happening across the United States, it is thought that they are relatively typical of much of the Northeast and in other areas of the country where there are large urban populations located not too far from rural areas which are environmentally and aesthetically attractive. Such a situation seems conducive to promoting a quality-of-life migration.

The migrants, because of their value orientations and their potential usefulness as employees, employers, and public office holders, may well be a rural development resource. The fact that the migrants have not been driven to rural areas for economic reasons but are largely volunteer movers seeking a pleasing physical and social environment probably means that they will attempt to maintain those rural virtues they find pleasing. On the other hand, the average young age of the adults, their high levels of advanced education, and their upper white collar occupational training and experience, leads to the conclusion that they can positively affect their communities of choice. As rural sociologists we should continue to research the potential rural developmental and policy implications of the migration.

[8/] These and related hypotheses will be tested in a restudy of approximately one-fifth of the original in-migrant respondents. Extensive field interviewing has been conducted with each of the selected sample of original respondents and one of their settled neighbors. Reinterviews will be conducted periodically for a four-year period.

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ABSTRACT

The reversal in migration patterns i. the 1970's resulting in a net population flow from metropolitan (urban) to nonmetropolitan (rural) areas may have a variety of rural development consequences. One obvious effect in many rural communities and areas which, for decades, had been gaining population, if at all, at slow rates and which had experienced net out migration, is a sizeable population increase. Data from Maine where this process is taking place is utilized. One of the salient features of the migration flow is that it is quality-of-life oriented. The majority of these relatively young, highly educated persons with small families who are trained and experienced in the professional and managerial occupations have migrated from more rural areas to enjoy the physical and social amenities of at least a semi-rural way of life. The presence in rural communities of these highly qualified persons is seen as a type of developmental resource. Illustrations are given for Maine of the ways in which the newcomers are contributing to their communities.

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